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COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT
Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)
Eighth session, 27-30 May 2002

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

REPORT OF THE UN/CEFACT STEERING GROUP (CSG) MEETING

Geneva, 3-7 September 2001

(Third meeting 2001)

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Submitted by the UN/CEFACT Steering Group (CSG)

This document has been submitted by the UN/CEFACT Steering Group (CSG) for information as required under the UN/CEFACT procedures outlined in document TRADE/R.650. It is for information only. Items to be decided upon by the UN/CEFACT Plenary will be presented in a separate report from the Chairman to the CSG.

CSG Chairman:
Ray Walker, United Kingdom - UN/CEFACT Vice Chairman

CSG members present:
Dumitru Anca, Romania
David Dobbing, Australia - CDWG Chairman
Harry Featherstone, United States
Pierre Georget, France – EWG Chairman
Peter Guldentops, ICC
Päivi Lehtonen, Finland
Alexander de Lijster, Netherlands – ITPWG Chairman
Klaus-Dieter Naujok, Canada – TMWG Chairman
Grazyna Rzymkowska, Poland
Christina Wallén-Rahlén, Sweden
Peter Wilson, United Kingdom
Christoph Wolf, Germany

Ex-officio members and Rapporteurs present:
Mike Doran – BPAWG Chairman
Claude Hamon - Standards Liaison Rapporteur
Kenji Itoh, Japan - UN/CEFACT Vice-Chairman
David Marsh, United Kingdom – LWG Chairman and Legal Liaison Rapporteur
Santiago Milà, IAPH/ Spain - UN/CEFACT Vice-Chairman
Johnson Jubulu Olumekun, Nigeria - UN/CEFACT Vice-Chairman
Teresa Sorrenti, United States - UN/CEFACT Vice-Chairperson

Secretariat present:
Mario Apostolov
Hans Hansell

Apologies:
Dariush Haghighi-Talab, Islamic Republic of Iran
Dietmar Jost, WCO
Tahseen Ahmad Khan, India – Rapporteur for Asia

Common acronyms:
BPAWG - Business Process Analysis Working Group
CDWG - Codes Working Group
EWG - EDIFACT Working Group
LWG - Legal Working Group
TMWG - Techniques and Methodology Working Group
ebXML - Electronic Business XML initiative
AFACT - Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

EBT - Electronic Business Team
eBTWG - Electronic Business Transition Working Group
eBWG - Electronic Business Working Group
ECLAC - UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ESCAP - UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA - UN Economic and Social Commission for

BAC - Business Advisory Council
BIO - Business Information Objects
BOS - Business Object Summit
BPIM - Business Process and Information Modelling
BSR - Basic Semantic Register
BSU - Basic Semantic Unit
DMR - Directory Maintenance Request
DTD - Document Type Definition (in XML)

Western Asia
JTC1 - a joint ISO/IEC technical committee (JTC)
   dealing with information technology
OLA - Office of the Legal Adviser
T1 - Technical Assessment sub-group of the
   UN/EDIFACT Working Group (EWG)
XCBL - Common Business Language

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

1. Apologies were received from Dariush Haghighi-Talab, Dietmar Jost, Tahseen Ahmad Khan and from the UN/CEFACT Chairman. The CSG adopted the preliminary agenda and the minutes and report from the May 2001 CSG meeting. It reviewed the old and adopted a new action list, as contained in document CEFACT/2001/CS16.

INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON TRADE FACILITATION, 15-16 MAY 2002

2. Hans Hansell, Mario Apostolov and Alex de Lijster presented the project for an International Forum on Trade Facilitation. The CSG welcomed the Forum as an excellent opportunity to bolster the trade facilitation work of UN/CEFACT and the global remit of the Centre. It endorsed the Forum, and expressed some concerns related to the time required for professional planning and the resources needed to fulfill the vision of the event. It was necessary to target participants who could bring the message about the United Nations work in trade facilitation to a broader audience. Some CSG members stressed the necessity to prepare urgently the programme of the Forum, and undertook to establish contacts with high-level officials and CEOs.

ELECTRONIC BUSINESS STRATEGY – CURRENT POSITION, RESOURCES, FORWARD PLANS

3. The secretariat noted that the agreement between UN/CEFACT and OASIS and the document Service Sought Notice developed by the CSG had been received by the secretariat and had been sent to the United Nations Office of the Legal Adviser (OLA). The secretariat presented OLA's comments and a redrafted text of the Service Sought Notice to the CSG. The CSG Chairman gave some background information on the agreement between UN/CEFACT and OASIS, noting that it was a logical step from the long period of cooperation. He felt that he had acted in good faith as a UN/CEFACT officer empowered by the Plenary when signing this agreement. However, it had become clear that any agreement concerning UN/CEFACT would be a UNECE agreement, and this excluded the possibility for the CSG Chairman to sign an agreement on behalf of UN/CEFACT. Some CSG members suggested that a solution could be found if OASIS joined the MoU among UNECE, ISO, IEC and ITU. The UNECE secretariat proposed to hold a meeting with OASIS and CSG representatives to resolve the outstanding issues regarding the UN/CEFACT-OASIS agreement. This did not preclude CSG representatives discussing with OASIS representatives the issues that needed to be resolved in advance of any meeting. Three particular points would be taken into account as suggested by the CSG Chairman: the change of the name of the agreement, the necessity to address the copyright issues and the change of the name of the management committee back to "coordination committee".

4. Hans Hansell informed the meeting about the new United Nations administrative instruction, related to the use of the logo, and requested the CSG officers and Working Group chairmen to take action to comply with the new requirements. Klaus-Dieter Naujok reminded the meeting that the copyright of the EDIFACT directories was different from the copyright mentioned in the United Nations legal advice. It was felt that it might be possible to devise a broader copyright policy for the new standard that comes out of the ebXML. The CSG and the secretariat had a positive discussion on the review of the document Service Sought Notice. The CSG Chairman noted that the document was initially drafted with the objective of identifying potential partners. This draft had been forwarded to the OLA, who had commented on it and had asked for further explanation of the necessity for and functions of a service provider. It was decided that Harry Featherstone would redraft and coordinate with the secretariat the UNECE the framework document based on the Service Sought Notice. The new draft could then be forwarded, together with all necessary information, to the United Nations Procurement Office to identify and obtain professional support for an eBWG service provider.

5. Peter Wilson and Harry Featherstone introduced a proposal for the structure of the prospective eBWG, which would develop e-business standards. The meeting decided to start a formal consultation process, beginning with the EWG. The CSG had no predetermined position as to the eventual organization of the eBWG, however, it confirmed its firm commitment to the key elements of the vision in the Strategy Paper presented to the UN/CEFACT Plenary in March 2001 (TRADE/CEFACT/2001/7/Rev.1). The intent was for this consultation to be finalised for plenary approval in May 2002. However, if rapid progress could be made, and a consensual position reached, it might be possible to use the inter-sessional procedure for earlier approval. The CSG agreed that each working group would nominate 2 representatives who were not members of the CSG to coordinate the consultation, and the secretariat would set up an e-mail list server including these representatives and the CSG. The CSG agreed on a consultation time table as follows: all working groups would submit their first proposals by 25 October 2001; a first draft for the structure of eBWG would be prepared by 26 November 2001 and submitted to heads of delegation; comments on that proposal would be submitted by 7 January 2002; a final proposal for Plenary decision would be made by 28 February 2002; and, in addition to HoDs, all working group chairmen were invited to submit their positions on the final proposal for the Plenary by 31 March 2002. The CSG would nominate an editing team for the final document. An inter-sessional approval would require finalization of the consultation by end of November 2001.

6. The CSG Chairman noted that the UN/CEFACT Chairman had considered a proposal to organize an extraordinary plenary meeting, where the HoDs could be informed about the developments that had led to the establishment of an Electronic Business Working Group; and the secretariat had proposed a date in November 2001. The CSG discussed the issues and decided to advise the UN/CEFACT Chairman and the secretariat that it was not beneficial to hold a one day extraordinary plenary meeting in the autumn of 2001, because: (a) it would be extremely difficult for a fully constituted Plenary to meet in view of time and travel constraints for the participants; and (b) consultation might still be in progress. However, recognizing the need to give further information

    to the heads of delegation, the CSG recommended the use of the heads of delegation listserver for distributing updated information and the use of the inter-sessional procedure for earlier approval of the structure of the new working group, if rapid progress is made.

7. Klaus-Dieter Naujok reported on the development of the Electronic Business Transition Working Group (eBTWG) as an ad hoc interim solution before the establishment of the permanent eBWG and the cooperation with CommerceNet, which had offered a contribution-in-kind to support the eBTWG,

notably its first meeting in October 2001 in San Francisco. Three project teams had been established, including a group on the Core Components Specifications. The group working on a Universal Business Library (UBL) was invited to submit a project proposal to the eBTWG, because it felt that it had responsibility in this field. Hans Hansell reminded the CSG that contributions in kind had to be received by the secretariat.

PROMOTION OF UN/CEFACT'S OBJECTIVES

8. Alex de Lijster and Mario Apostolov reported on the status of all Recommendations, and on the update of their publication on the web site. The informative annex and the addendum to Recommendations 1 and 28 have been uploaded. A new button, containing the Glossary of Terms used in the UN/CEFACT environment, was added to the web site. David Dobbing requested to upload the available information on the eBTWG web site on the UN/CEFACT web site.

9. Grazyna Rzymkowska and Harry Featherstone reported on the findings of the ad hoc group on relations with universities. The secretariat would create a list of academics involved in the UN/CEFACT work, and expressed its readiness to send information and materials about UN/CEFACT to academic institutions interested by the work of the Centre.

10. Hans Hansell informed the meeting about the new United Nations administrative instruction ST/AI/2001/5, particularly in what concerns the use of the logo on web sites, which was not allowed on web sites not located on a United Nations web server, and the Identity Manual. Mr. Naujok noted that the UN would not have the resources to run working group web sites (e.g. those of EWG, TMWG, eBTWG and ebXML) currently run by outside organizations, and that the CSG should bring its argument to the United Nations Publication Board in New York. The CSG decided to evaluate and analyse the impact of the administrative instruction on UN Internet Publishing, and then report to the heads of delegation. It would subsequently request the working group chairmen to take necessary action to comply with the latest instructions as related to the web site contents.

REPORTS FROM MANDATED GROUPS

11. The meeting received summary reports from mandated groups. The Chairman of the CDWG noted that Mr. Henk van Maaren was nominated vice chairman of the CDWG. The CDWG meeting in October 2001 was expected to finalize the work on Recommendation 20. Hans Hansell noted that Tauno Kangur was temporarily assigned to the Statistical Division, and Claudio Meza was taking over the maintenance of the LOCODE. Mr. Gösta Roos had handed over the master files to the UNECE secretariat, and Hans Hansell had drafted a letter to the Government of Sweden thanking them for their support for the work of Mr. Roos.

12. The acting ITPWG Chairman noted that the group continued its work on the simplification and harmonization of documents, on the revision of Recommendation 12, and closely followed the work of the WCO on the Unique Consignment Reference. His intention was to hold future ITPWG meetings in Geneva and work globally through regional subgroups with the assistance of the regional commissions of the United Nations. He felt that the ITPWG had a broader agenda than the Road Map document. Klaus-Dieter Naujok confirmed that the technical specifications in ebXML could be translated into less technical language and become the basis for United Nations Recommendations.

13. The EWG Chairman reported that the new directory maintenance request (DMR) list prepared by the Technical Assessment Group (T1) of EWG was available on the web site. The EWG would produce three directories this year and the additional, third directory would be named D.01.C ("D" for directory, "01" for the year 2001 and "C" for third directory for the year). Nevertheless, Pierre Georget felt that in the future the Group would return to producing only two directories per year, and keep only "A" and "B" in the names.

14. The LWG Vice-Chairman reported on the LWG meetings in June and September 2001. He expressed the gratitude of the LWG to the Government of Tuscany and to the Electronic Commerce Platform Netherlands (ECP.NL) for financing the participation of the secretariat. The LWG was working on three possible deliverables in the area of: Certification Authorities (CA) and cross-border recognition of CAs; a generic form of a Trading Partner Agreement (TPA) that could be used in ebXML (work to be done together with EDIFICE); and a Recommendation on Online Dispute Resolution (ODR), together with ECP.NL. The LWG was working on identifying the legal implications of ebXML. The LWG had further developed its global structure.

15. The TMWG Chairman reported on the work of the TMWG and the N090 document. N090 has not yet been finalized, but the TMWG Chairman reassured the CSG that version 10 of the document was ready for use. The Group would prepare an updated version by the end of 2001.

16. The BPAWG Chairman presented the annual review of the BPAWG. The BPAWG Chairman and Mr. Colin Clark presented to several EWG meetings the advantages of modelling, and the procurement, transport, insurance and environment groups of EWG had shown interest in it. The group had tested the UN/CEFACT Modelling Methodology, and had started presenting the reference model. The BPAWG Chairman noted that the work of BPAWG should not be lost in the restructuring of the e-business working group structure of UN/CEFACT. He suggested that the ITPWG should be integrated in the modelling and electronic business work of UN/CEFACT, so that the ITPWG could adopt a fast track towards trade facilitation. Harry Featherstone suggested to discuss the distribution of roles in the new e-business work of UN/CEFACT. The CSG Chairman congratulated the BPAWG and its Chairman for the achievements of the Group.

DEVELOPMENTS IN STANDARDIZATION

17. The next meeting of the ISO MoU Management Group would take place on 8 and 9 November in the United States of America, and it is expected to discuss the division of responsibilities between UN/CEFACT and OASIS. The CSG Chairman noted the necessity of the closest possible cooperation between the joint MoU secretariat and UN/CEFACT. Claude Hamon reported on the work on the BSR and the possibility of using XML in it. Klaus-Dieter Naujok pointed to the necessity to align the BSR work with ebXML and the development of Core Components in ebXML. Claude Hamon noted that a positive discussion was under way on the possibility that the ISO-IEC Joint Technical Committee (JTC1) grants A liaison status to UN/CEFACT. If JTC1 grants UN/CEFACT an A liaison status, their liaison officer might participate in the UN/CEFACT Plenary. Klaus-Dieter Naujok noted that it was possible to move the ebXML specifications to the JTC1 in an open standardisation process.

DEVELOPMENTS IN RECOMMENDATIONS AND OTHER DELIVERABLES

18. The Vice-Chairman of LWG reported on the progress in the development of a Recommendation on cross-certification. The ITPWG Chairman reported on the plans to develop a Road Map for Trade

Facilitation, the work on which could be coordinated or merged with the work of UNCTAD on a Handbook on trade facilitation. The Road Map would indicate to developing and transition economies that there were many things that countries could do to facilitate trade even before automation. It was noted that because of the other discussions on electronic business there had been little progress in the preparation for publication of the ebXML specifications.

DEVELOPMENTS WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

19. Christina Wallén-Rahlén informed the meeting that the Chairman of the WTO Committee on Trade in Goods was carrying out consultations in advance of the Fourth WTO Ministerial Meeting in Qatar in November 2001; while various groups of countries were carrying out regional meetings. Most signs on a prospective progress in trade facilitation at the WTO Ministerial in November were negative. Further, she noted that the Trade Committee of the OECD was working on a compilation of studies on the cost of inefficient trade procedures, and undertook to send the contact details and the latest OECD paper to the CSG Chairman and the secretariat, to be used in the preparation for the International Forum on Trade Facilitation.

SECRETARIAT RESOURCES

20. Hans Hansell informed the meeting that Mr. Tom Butterly would take the position servicing the CSG as of 1 October 2001. Rocio Cardenas would be taking one year's leave of absence as of 22 September 2001. Tauno Kangur was temporarily moving to the Statistics Division. A young professional would be temporarily nominated in his place.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

21. The CSG was not planning to go ahead with setting up a business advisory body before finalizing the establishment of the eBWG. Hans Hansell noted that the secretariat would wish to cooperate more closely with the CSG, which would mean a possibility to work directly with other UN staff members and with the UNECE management. He informed the CSG that Paolo Garonna was nominated Deputy Executive Secretary of UNECE, and expressed his conviction that UN/CEFACT and the CSG's cooperation with him would be fruitful.

22. The CSG Chairman thanked the participants for their constructive input in the work of this meting. He extended the special gratitude of the CSG to Alex de Lijster for the organization and hospitality arrangements for the meeting. He also thanked Mario Apostolov for his enthusiasm while working as the secretary of the CSG.

23. The following dates for CSG meetings were noted:

> 19-22 November 2001, Geneva
> 25-28 February 2002, Geneva
> 17 May 2002, Geneva
> 24-27 June 2002, Geneva
> 21-24 October 2002, Berlin (to be confirmed)

A likely schedule for future CSG meetings would be June - October - February.

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